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Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 IGA-02 DODE-00 /055 W
----------152117Z 040940 /73
R 151355Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 950

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 1507

FOR UNDERSECRETARY FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND PM DIRECTOR
GELB FROM PICKERING

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, JO, US
SUBJECT: F-5 AIRCRAFT -- SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

REF: (A) HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC 112100Z MAR 77
(B) MAP AMMAN 682, DTG 151240Z MAR 77

1. I WANT TO CALL TO YOUR PERSONAL ATTNETION A DECISION TAKEN UNILATERALLY BY THE AIR FORCE TO PRODUCE A NEW STANDARD VERSION OF THE F-5E AIRCRAFT WHICH I BELIEVE HAS SERIOUS POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR JORDAN AND PERHAPS THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN GENERAL. IN EFFECT THIS GENERALIZED UPGRADING OF THE F-5E PRODUCES A MORE SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT FOR SOME COUNTRIES WHICH IS NOT WANTED BY JORDAN, BUT FOR WHICH UPGRADING JORDANIAN PROGRAMS WILL HAVE TO PAY IF USAF DECISION IS ALLOWED TO STAND.

2. YOU WILL RECALL THAT SOME YEARS AGO THE F-5 AIRCRAFT WAS DESIGNED AND PRODUCED AS A LIGHTWEIGHT AND INEXPENSIVE FIGHTER FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS WITH CAPABILITIES TO MATCH COMPARABLE SOVIET AIRCRAFT. JORDAN AMONG OTHER STATES AGREED
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TO STANDARDIZE ITS AIR FORCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ON THE F5-E. SUBSEQUENTLY, I UNDERSTAND, A NUMBER OF PURCHASERS, SIGNIFICANTLY MORE AFFLUENT THAN JORDAN, ASKED FOR MODIFICATIONS OF THE AIRPLANE TO INSTALL MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND ELECTRONICS. WE NOW BELIEVE THE NEW "BASELINE CONFIGURATION" OF THE F-5E WILL CONTAIN THE NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS OF THE AIR-

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PLANE IN ORDER THAT THE NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND ELEC-
TRONICS CAN BE "PLUGGED IN" TO THIS CONFIGURATION.
THE EFFECT IS TO RAISE THE COST OF THE F5-E FROM
$2.567 MILLION TO $3.512 MILLION AND FOR THE
TWO-SEATER TRAINING VERSION A COMPARABLE FIGURE.
THIS IS A PRICE RISE OF 36 AND 37 PERCENT RESPECTIVELY.
WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL NEW F5-E'S WILL BE PRODUCED
IN THIS CONFIGURATION EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT
IN JORDAN TO PROVIDE FOR THE ADDITION OF MORE ELECTRONICS
AND WEAPONRY. IN ADDITION, SPECIAL GROUND SUPPORT
EQUIPMENT IS REQUIRED OVER AND ABOVE WHAT HAS ALREADY
BEEN PURCHASED IN JORDAN TO THE TUNE OF ABOUT $3 MILLION
TO OPERATE THIS VERSION. FINALLY WE HAVE NO COST
ESTIMATE FOR ADDITIONAL SPARE PARTS FOR THIS VERSION. THIS
IS PRESUMABLY STILL YET TO COME.

3. THE EFFECTS IN JORDAN WILL BE SERIOUS. BECAUSE OF FUND
LIMITATIONS, ACQUISITION PROGRAM NUMBERS FOR F-5E'S WILL BE
REDUCED FROM 10 TO 6. JORDAN NEEDS NONE OF THE
EXTRA BENEFITS. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, OUR ARGUMENTS
IN THE PAST TO DAMPEN JORDANIAN APPETITES FOR
SOPHISTICATED AIR MUNITIONS ON THE BASIS THAT THEIR AIRCRAFT
FLEET WOULD HAVE TO BE REFITTED TO ACCOMMODATE THIS CONFIG-
URATION ARE NOT TOSSED OUT THE WINDOW BECAUSE THE NEW
VERSION WILL BE SO CONFIGURED. THERE IS THE ADDITIONAL
ELEMENT OF RECONFIGURING JORDAN'S EXISTING F-5E FLEET
IN ORDER TO STANDARDIZE THEM, AND OF COURSE THE INCREASED
COSTS THAT WILL ENTAIL. THE WHOLE PROGRAM SEEMS SO
COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO WHAT WE UNDERSTAND ARE THE
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POLICIES OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION THAT I BELIEVE A
VERY SERIOUS LOOK IS REQUIRED.

4. FINALLY, IF F5-E COSTS ARE SO INCREASED, JORDAN
AND OTHERS MAY BEGIN LOOKING TO THE NEW F-16 CLASS
FIGHTER AIRCRAFT AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE IN TERMS
OF FINANCING. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS THE DIRECTION
IN WHICH WE WANT TO GO OR SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE
JORDANIANS TO GO.

5. I DO NOT KNOW THE PROBLEMS OF CONTINUING TO
PRODUCE THE PRESENT STANDARD VERSION OF THE F5-E.
HOWEVER STATES SUCH AS JORDAN WHICH DO NOT NEED ALL
THE GIMMICKRY INCORPORATED IN THE NEW "BASELINE
CONFIGURATION" SHOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO PAY FOR IT.
THIS HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF A SERIOUS ISSUE AT THE
SPRING US-JORDAN MILITARY MEETING IN WASHINGTON.

6. MY DEFENSE ATTACHE HAS PREPARED AN EXCELLENT

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CABLE ON THE SUBJECT (REF B) WHICH WILL BE FORWARDED
TO YOU SEPARATELY. WE SUGGEST ALSO YOU ASK USAF FOR
REF A.
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